

SOUTH WEST COLLEGE GOVERNING BODY

Minutes of a meeting of the **Education, Quality & Performance Committee**
held on Wednesday 16 March 2022 at 5.00 pm
via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:

- Ms Siobhan Breen
- Mrs Deborah Brown
- Ms Elaine Greer
- Mr Colin Lewis (Interim Chief Executive)
- Ms Anne McCleary
- Mr Michael McGuckin
- Mrs Joanne Moore (Committee Chair)
- Ms Lynsey Quinn

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Dr Jill Cush, Deputy Chief Executive
- Mr John Moss, Head of Built Environment, Creative & Life Sciences Faculty (*Item 6.0 only*)
- Mrs Breidge Morrison, Minute Taker for the Governing Body
- Mr Ciaran McManus, Assistant Chief Executive (Industry Partnerships & Centres for Excellence)
- Dr Nicholas O'Shiel, Chair of the Governing Body
- Mr Mark Sterrit, Boardroom Apprentice
- Mr Jim Mullen, Change Management Team

1.0 PRELIMINARIES AND APOLOGIES

Mrs Moore opened the meeting by welcoming all present to the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting, in particular to new members, advising the protocol of the use of the yellow hand within Teams to contribute. Mrs Moore also shared a warm welcome to Jim Mullen, former ETI and now a member of the SWC Change Management Team.

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Mrs Isherwood and Miss McLoughlin.

2.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

Ms McCleary declared a conflict relating to Paper 05.09 and offered to withdraw at that point if detailed discussion was required.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 03 Minutes of the Education, Quality & Performance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 19 January 2022.

There were no matters arising.

4.0 KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 04.01 List of Key Strategic Issues
- Paper 04.02 Key Strategic Issues Management Update.

Mr Lewis referenced the management update on the Committee's key strategic issues provided in paper 04.02 and advised that a comprehensive report on the matters within had been presented at the 2 March 2022 Governing Body meeting. He proceeded to provide further updates by exception.

Mr Lewis reported on strategic issues which the College will face going forward, exacerbated by a challenging fiscal environment in the years to come. He referred members to the 5-year performance data and trends 15-21 presentation which highlighted a reduction in FE numbers, retention data, Essential Skills data, the curriculum delivery model, access to Higher Education and the Quality of Teaching and Learning. Mr Lewis suggested that the Education Committee may wish to focus on these items individually and in depth going forward to help members understand and constructively challenge the Management Team.

Mr Lewis referred to the Graduation Ceremony on 09.03.22, and recorded a sincere thanks to the organising team and teaching teams in the College who made this marvellous occasion possible in all respects. Mr Lewis expressed his delight to see students graduating in person, a heartening and fitting celebration event after all students and staff have had to endure throughout the pandemic.

In response to comments from members, Mr Lewis reiterated the need for a deep dive approach into the main strategic issues facing the college and the need for the Sector to promote FE and lobby Government.

Mrs Moore thanked Mr Lewis on this his last occasion for his contribution and strategic focus, which has been so helpful to the Committee up to this point.

5.0 MANAGEMENT REPORT

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 05 Management Report
- Paper 05.01 CfE FELM Implementation Plan March Review
- Paper 05.02 CfE HE Implementation Plan March Review
- Paper 05.03 CfE WBL Implementation Plan March Review
- Paper 05.04 Digital Strategy March Review
- Paper 05.05 CfE SICLD Implementation Plan March Review
- Paper 05.06 Safeguarding Care and Welfare Report
- Paper 05.07 Report on Externally Funded Projects
- Paper 05.08 Safeguarding Care and Welfare Annual Report 2022
- Paper 05.09 Work Ready Employability Skills Termination Letter
- Paper 05.10 Benefits Realisation Alignment of Curriculum with Emerging 10x Priorities
- Paper 05.11 Additional Support for Students – Application Enrolment
- Paper 05.12 Policy Update Note
- Paper 05.13 Marketing and Communications Update March 2022
- Paper 05.14 Safeguarding Care and Welfare Policy

- Paper 05.15 Managing Work Based Learning in Higher Education
- Paper 05.16 South West College Centre Assessment Policy.

5.1 Further Education

Ref: Management Report Section 1.0 and Paper 05.01

Mr McManus drew attention to the need to align College provision to the cyber and creative industries going forward as these are talent hungry industries, highly engaged and offer potential employment opportunities. He pointed out that this initiative will have resource implications, in terms of recruiting staff and securing resources in an increasingly difficult fiscal environment. Mr McManus outlined planned events to raise employer awareness of cyber security and creative industries, highlighting ongoing work with NI Screen to develop academies e.g. Production Assistant Academy to commence after Easter and GET Engineering Careers event to take place on 26.03.22.

5.2 Higher Education

Ref: Management Report Section 2.0 and Paper 05.02

Mr McManus reported that recruitment to Part Time Higher Education remains challenging, however the refresh of the part time curriculum offer in the form of a range of new Micro Credential programmes has been developed and offered out to the market.

Mr McManus referenced the recently published DfE Northern Ireland Higher Level Apprenticeship statistical bulletin which provides data on HLA uptake across the sector. He reported that a new on-line employer portal for prospective HLAs and employers seeking talent will be introduced this academic year and it is hoped this initiative will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the HLA brokerage process. Following comments by members, Mr McManus went on to explain the relationship the College has with employers, their involvement in Industrial Advisory Boards, how employers help to inform curriculum development/priorities which align to government, provide PBL opportunities for our students and the use of these employer stakeholders as guest speakers for student events/presentations.

Mr McManus referred to the support provided to HE students by the newly introduced HE Mentor. This initiative is an important source of assistance and guidance and will have a positive impact on retention of HE students.

5.3 Work Based Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 3.0 and Paper 05.03

Mr McManus reported on the quality and impact of the College’s apprenticeship provision and its recognition at the Northern Ireland Apprentice of the Year Awards, in particular, the partnership between SWC and the Dungannon based packaging manufacturer Greiner which was recognised in the larger employer category at the awards ceremony held on 09.02.22.

The College also participated in NI Apprenticeship Week on 10.02.22 at which CfE WBL staff piloted the “All about Apprenticeships Call Back Initiative”. The feedback was positive, with all callers appreciative of 1-1 discussions on options available. This concept was well marketed, discharged and received by the intended audience.

Mr McManus reported that while the fiscal environment remains challenging and no undertaking has yet been received from the Department in respect of continuation funding

for the welding academies during 2022-2023, the college is working with industry to develop a collaborative model that will sustain this pipeline in the period ahead.

Mr McManus invited members to request a tour of the Enniskillen Workhouse, now that the restoration phase of the Project is nearing completion.

5.4 Digital Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 4.0 and Paper 05.04

Mr McManus referred to the statistics relating to Electronic Portfolios for apprentices, which at 29%, highlights the need for further work to be done.

Mr McManus also reported on the launch of the Single Service Helpdesk on 08.03.22. The Digital Services team will continue to support Technical Services in the discharge of the recovery action plan that has been developed in response to feedback from staff and students on the usability of hard and software across the college estate.

5.5 Social Inclusion, Community Learning and Development

Ref: Management Report Section 5.0 and Paper 05.05

Mr McManus reported on the outcome of the recent Education & Training Inspectorate (ETI) inspection of the College Connect, where inspectors awarded the programme the highest level of confidence, identified 21 key strengths and no areas for improvement.

Mr McManus reported that the college has submitted a concept note to SEUPB, outlining a proposal for a Youthscape Next Generation Programme which will be delivered in partnership with Tides training and MSLETB, for which an indicative budget of 7.2m euro has been agreed.

Mr McManus also updated members on the recent submission of tenders in response to a call from the FODC Labour Market Partnership (LMP) for the delivery of various academies in Welding, Childcare and Hospitality.

5.6 Excellence in Teaching & Learning

Ref: Management Report Section 6.0

Mr McManus reported that DfE will undertake a 2.5 day Higher Level Apprenticeship audit at the end of March with a Self-Evaluation and Quality Improvement Plan to be submitted to DfE in April. This will form part of the Annual Quality Assurance Return.

Mr McManus updated members on the “Festival of Teaching and Learning” which will take place in June, part of the Teaching and Learning Strategy, which will allow dissemination of classroom best practice.

5.7 Economic Engagement

Ref: Management Report Section 7.0

Mr McManus reported on promoting entrepreneurship in the classroom. To date 47 students have participated in the sector Hub PBL entrepreneurship competition with a range of ideas under development including establishing a coffee bar, motor cycle lift and furniture upcycling. The emergence of the Enniskillen Workhouse in September 2022 as a hub for demand led entrepreneurship will further enhance the college capacity to support aspiring entrepreneurs.

Members welcomed this initiative and there was a request for liaison with the Entrepreneurship Hub in the development of the Workhouse Strategy.

5.8 **Safeguarding**

Ref: Management Report Section 11.0 and Paper 05.06

Mr McManus referred members to the detailed report, highlighting ongoing integrated support, seminars, health and wellbeing workshops, referrals to counselling, significant work ongoing. Referrals to Safeguarding Assistants have reduced since December and there were no referrals to Social Services.

5.9 **Additional Items**

Ref: Management Report Section 13.0

- **Report on Externally Funded Projects**

Ref: Management Report Section 13.0 Paper 05.07

Mr McManus to follow up on query in relation to the payment of invoices at the request of members.

- **Annual Report on Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults**

Ref: Management Report Section 13.0 Paper 05.08

- **Work Ready Employability Skills Termination Letter**

Ref: Management Report Section 13.0 Paper 05.09

- **Benefits Realisation Alignment of Curriculum with Emerging 10X Priorities**

Ref: Management Report Section 13.0 Paper 05.10

Mr McManus advised that further focus will continue on alignment of the 3 Faculties and 9 Schools against the 5 clusters in 10 x Strategy to map to new and emerging technologies.

- **Additional Support for Students – Application Enrolment**

Ref: Management Report Section 13.0 Paper 05.11

Mr McManus reported that additional staff will be recruited for the application/enrolment period between July and September. Mrs Moore expressed the disappointment of the Committee that the problems identified in the application/enrolment phase were not acknowledged in the report. Members welcomed additional support and encouraged this development as a **priority**. Clearly identified application/enrolment processes, distinct roles and responsibilities should be shared across the wider staff body, along with refresher training on all elements of curriculum offer.

- **Update on Safeguarding Care and Welfare and Managing Work Based Learning in Higher Education Policies**

Ref: Management Report Section 13.0 Paper 05.12

The Safeguarding Care and Welfare Policy is a sectoral policy, and whilst it is recognised that the Further Education Retention and Disposal Policy specifies a retention period of eight years, any alteration of the existing retention period as specified in the Safeguarding Care and Welfare Policy would require discussion and agreement at a sectoral level. Mr McManus will raise this anomaly with the appropriate sectoral working group and seek agreement to revise the retention period to eight years.

- **Marketing**

Ref: Management Report Section 13.0 Paper 05.13

Members commented that future marketing campaigns could be directed to nightclubs and sports clubs to focus on the younger target audience. Dr Cush updated members on the recent appointment of an Internal Communications Officer. This appointment will focus on raising awareness of and disseminating College business within the staff body.

5.10 Policy Reviews

Ref: Management Report Section 14.0 and Papers 05.14, 05.15, 05.16

AGREED: that the following policies be recommended to the Governing Body for approval:

- **Managing Work Based Learning in Higher Education**
- **South West College Centre Assessment Policy**

5.11 Other

Ref: Management Report Sections 8.0, 9.0, & 12.0

The updates and additional information provided in the Management Report on Internationalisation (Curriculum), the Engineering & Manufacturing Hub, Implementation of the Annual Development Plan, Marketing, were referenced.

Members thanked Mr McManus for his thorough reports.

6.0 REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGIC PLANS OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, CREATIVE & LIFE SCIENCES FACULTY

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 06 Performance & Strategic Plans of the Built Environment, Creative & Life Sciences Faculty.

John Moss, Head of Faculty BECLS, joined the meeting for this item.

With reference to paper 06, Mr Moss commenced his presentation on the performance and strategic plans of the Built Environment, Creative & Life Sciences Faculty, giving a brief overview of enrolments, highlighting the need for strategic alignment of 14-19 for FE, together with staff KPIs and ongoing engagement with stakeholders and new curriculum, business development and future opportunities for students. Mr Moss advised members that the current key challenges for his Faculty is firstly the ongoing resourcing of staff cover due to covid response requirements and secondly, recruitment of HE students; Mr Moss looks forward to the outcome of the HE in FE Review.

John Moss withdrew from the meeting at this juncture.

7.0 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

At the request of the Committee Chair, Mr McManus undertook to arrange for an update on progress of the Quality Improvement Plan to be provided at the May 2022 Committee meeting.

8.0 REVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

PREVIOUSLY ISSUED to all members:

- Paper 08 Outstanding Actions.

It was noted that all listed actions have been addressed and the Chair of the Education Committee will liaise with the Secretary to the Governing Body regarding the critical analysis of performance to agree key challenges for focussed analysis by this Committee, as discussed previously under Item 4.0.

10.0 REFLECTION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MEETING

The Committee Chair spoke of the value of the reports provided by Mr Lewis and Mr McManus.

Dr O'Shiel asked that reports to the Committee are strategically focused, with a bulleted summary, similar to style of reporting provided by Mr Lewis.

Mr Mullen thanked the Committee for permitting his attendance/observation.

CONFIRMED AND ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNING BODY AT A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 APRIL 2022.

CHAIRMAN



DATE 27/04/2022

SUMMARY OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

#	Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Action
1	16/03/2022	5.9	Mr McManus to follow up on query in relation to the payment of invoices.
2	16/03/2022	7.0	Update on the progress of the Quality Improvement Plan to be provided at the May 2022 Committee meeting.
3	16/03/2022	8.0	Chair of the Committee to liaise with the Secretary to the Governing Body regarding the critical analysis of performance to agree key challenges for focussed analysis by this Committee, as discussed under Item 4.0.